



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Regional Conference
7–9 March 2016, Algiers, Algeria







SEIZING THE MOMENTUM, BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

There is no doubt that small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea play a significant social and economic role: they constitute over 80 percent of the fishing fleet, employ at least 60 percent of those workers directly engaged in fishing activity and account for approximately 25 percent of the total landing value from capture fisheries in the region.

At their best, small-scale fisheries exemplify sustainable resource use: exploiting living marine resources in a way that minimizes environmental degradation while maximizing economic and social benefits. Yet concerted effort is needed to ensure that best practices become standard practice. To this end, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), including its Mediterranean regional projects, are organizing in partnership with the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-MAIB), the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and in collaboration with the Government of Algeria a Regional Conference on “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”.

In 2013, the same partners organized the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Malta, 27–30 November 2013), in collaboration with the Government of Malta. For the first time in this region, representatives of national administrations, international and intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as fisheries scientists, professionals and experts gathered around the same table to discuss common issues with regard to the promotion of sustainable small-scale fisheries. This event demonstrated the potential of the small-scale fisheries sector to alleviate poverty, ensure food security and contribute to Blue Growth strategies. It can be considered as a milestone which raised awareness about the main issues at stake, laying the groundwork for future action in the region.

Building upon the momentum created, the organizing partners agreed that concrete steps should be taken towards securing a sustainable future for this sector. The Regional Conference will hence offer a unique opportunity to intensify efforts, in a concerted manner, to secure common strategies for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the region.

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of several wooden floats, likely used in fishing, which are reddish-brown in color and have a hole in the center. They are intertwined with thick, white, braided rope. The lighting is bright, creating strong highlights and shadows on the surfaces of the floats and rope.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA

Since 2013, much progress has been made to improve knowledge about small-scale fisheries and to enhance the management and support of this sector in the region. The first Regional Programme on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, established by the GFCM to promote, with interested partners, projects aimed at improving the livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities and ensuring the sustainable management of this sector, is certainly a major achievement.

Another major benchmark is the endorsement in 2014 by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), which is no doubt a historic event and a potential turning point for the development of the sector.

In parallel, the GFCM has introduced significant changes in its institutional and legal framework to increase the focus on small-scale fisheries and local communities, and has launched a comprehensive data collection tool that provides for the annual submission of data on small-scale fisheries. It is now time to build upon the progress made and move forward with implementing and consolidating the outcomes attained thus far.



OBJECTIVES OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Building upon the Blue Growth initiative promoted by FAO and following the ecosystem approach advocated in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Regional Conference focusses on the main socio-economic and environmental challenges for the development of sustainable small-scale fisheries. Based on the concrete results of case studies carried out in different areas throughout the region as well as on available information and data, it is designed as an interactive forum to discuss priorities, possible solutions and practical recommendations for the consideration of decision-makers. Ultimately, the Conference seeks to promote political commitment towards tailored strategies for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region.

PARTICIPANTS

The Regional Conference is open to representatives of fisheries departments and administrations from all Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal States (both GFCM and non GFCM Members), government agencies dealing with small-scale fisheries, representatives of international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national and regional fisheries cooperatives, small-scale fishers and fishworkers organizations and communities, partner organizations and civil society.



PROGRAMME

Five thematic panels will address the main challenges for small-scale fisheries development, building on the thematic areas presented at the 2013 Symposium. Each panel will present the results of case studies carried out in connection with the panel theme. It will be coordinated by a partner organization and will prompt discussions and reflections among participants so that relevant conclusions can be derived.

PANEL 1 - Supporting the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea under the Blue Growth perspective (GFCM and FAO Mediterranean regional projects)

The current status of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea will be presented, particularly with regard to their socio-economic impact. The promotion of small-scale fisheries as a strategy for Blue Growth will be discussed.

PANEL 2 - Strengthening the role of stakeholders in the context of management and co-management schemes (WWF)

Existing management and co-management options will be reviewed, particularly highlighting the role of small-scale fisher organizations and regional platforms, with a view to identifying ways to strengthen stakeholder roles.

PANEL 3 - Improving the efficiency of marine protected areas (MPAs) as fisheries management tools and benefits from involving the small-scale fisheries sector (MedPAN)

Strategies will be discussed for promoting conservation and sustainability by integrating small-scale fisheries into MPAs.

PANEL 4 - Enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains (CIHEAM-MAIB)

Recent developments and innovations in small-scale fisheries value chains will be presented. Potential areas for investment and improvement will be highlighted.

PANEL 5 - Putting the principles of the SSF Guidelines into practice: the case of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department)

Avenues, challenges and opportunities for using the SSF Guidelines as a tool to promote sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea will be explored in order to identify key elements to include in national and regional plans of action.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



VENUE

The Regional Conference will be held from 7–9 March 2016 in Algiers, Algeria, and hosted by the Algerian Government. Practical information, including accommodation details, can be found on the Regional Conference webpage.

WORKING LANGUAGES

The Regional Conference will be held in English, French and Arabic. Simultaneous interpretation services will be provided.

SIDE EVENTS

Side events will be organized in connection with the thematic panels. These will showcase specific experiences of sustainable small-scale fisheries in the region.

HOW TO REGISTER?

Participants are invited to register online at the Conference webpage www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/ssfconference2016 no later than **31 January 2016**. Participants wishing to submit a contribution for a side event are invited to apply on the Conference webpage no later than **15 January 2016**.

Participants are responsible for their own accommodation and travel expenses and for obtaining in their countries the necessary visa for entering Algeria. Conference registration is free of charge.

CONTACTS

For any further information about the Regional Conference, please visit:
www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/ssfconference2016

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